

(12) INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(19) World Intellectual Property  
Organization  
International Bureau



(43) International Publication Date  
19 February 2004 (19.02.2004)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number  
WO 2004/015542 A2

- (51) International Patent Classification<sup>7</sup>: G06F
- (21) International Application Number:  
PCT/US2003/025092
- (22) International Filing Date: 12 August 2003 (12.08.2003)
- (25) Filing Language: English
- (26) Publication Language: English
- (30) Priority Data:  
60/402,805 12 August 2002 (12.08.2002) US
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- (81) Designated States (*national*): AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EC, EE, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MZ, NI, NO, NZ, OM, PG, PH, PL, PT, RO, RU, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, SY, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VC, VN, YU, ZA, ZM, ZW.
- (84) Designated States (*regional*): ARIPO patent (GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HU, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK, TR), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

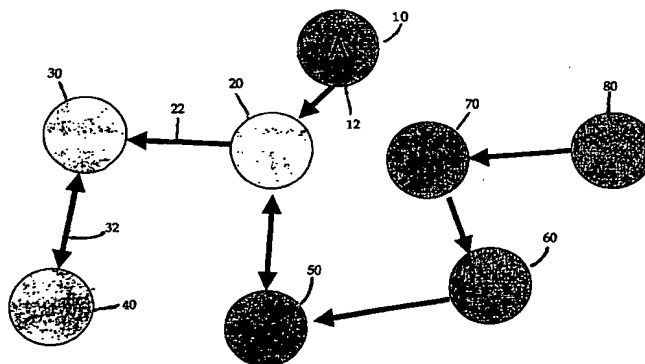
**Published:**

— without international search report and to be republished upon receipt of that report

For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

(54) Title: METHOD FOR CONTROLLING ACCESS TO INFORMATIONAL OBJECTS

## Web of Trust



(57) **Abstract:** The described embodiments of invention comprises a method and an apparatus for regulating access to objects by authorized entities. Authorized entities are entities authorized for access by either an owner entity of the regulated object or an entity authorized to authorize access to the regulated object. Each user, which may be a physical person or another information system, is identified using standard user validation techniques. When an object is first created or introduced to the system, that information is associated with an owner, who is one user on the system. The present embodiment allows the owner to define relationships with other users, either generally or regarding a particular object. The owner may or may not have trusted relationships with other users. A second user that has a trusted relationship with the owner automatically has access to the object without additional intervention by the owner. In addition, the second user may have a trusted relationship with another user. In the above example, the records administrator may have an assistant. This third user will also have access to the records. This Web of Trust may link users infinitely, but such a case would create an undue risk of compromise of the information. Thus, the present embodiment includes a facility for the owner to designate a maximum number of trusted links from the owner and other users.